



Remarks Prepared For Delivery

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Thank you, Rolando, for that kind introduction.

I'm delighted to be here to share the podium with Senators Cornyn and Martinez, two elected officials who have done so much for small business, especially the Hispanic business community.

And it is particularly nice to be here in the great state of Texas, the home state of my boss, President George W. Bush.

I'm here to explain how my agency, the Small Business Administration (SBA) -- which has helped millions of small entrepreneurs start or grow their small businesses -- supports Hispanic and other minority entrepreneurs here in Texas.

Access to Capital

First, we guarantee loans to help private lenders extend capital to entrepreneurs who might not fit into the lender's traditional credit standards.

Our financial assistance can be used for a wide variety of business purposes -- including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory, and real-estate purchases -- without overwhelming entrepreneurs with high interest rates or unaffordable terms. Depending on the program and the loan amount, we offer guarantees up to 85 percent on loans up to \$2 million.

These lending programs are used widely in Texas. This year, our San Antonio District Office approved more than \$277 million in loans. Much of this success, I might add, is due to the dedication and leadership of our district director, Pam Sapia, and her capable staff, whom I would like to acknowledge at this time.

Counseling and Technical Assistance

Second, with our resource partners -- SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, and Women's Business Centers -- SBA provides counseling, training, and technical assistance to entrepreneurs.

Last year, more than 1 million entrepreneurs received technical assistance and business counseling through one or more training programs offered by SBA or our partners.

We offer a wide range of educational topics, including marketing, writing a business plan, and starting exports. And, we have a large network of business executives and retirees who volunteer their time and offer specialized support to help start-up companies and businesses achieve their goals.

We supplement this face-to-face counseling with an extensive online presence, which is used by more than 1,000 entrepreneurs are using it each day.

Government Contracting

Finally, we help small businesses compete for federal contracts. Federal procurement dollars are a great way to invigorate entrepreneurship, and SBA works with other federal agencies to help them meet their goals for small business procurement.

As the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world, the U.S. government spent \$340 billion in 2006, the most recent year for which we have data. Of that, around \$80 billion went to small businesses.

How SBA Helps Hispanic Business

But we do more than just help small business in these many ways. We are also helping Hispanic small businesses in particular.

We are redesigning our Community Express loan to ensure that it meets the needs of underserved areas and provides entrepreneurs with technical assistance.

In fact, almost everything we do at SBA fills a crucial role that's not filled elsewhere. We get capital into the hands of entrepreneurs who otherwise wouldn't be able to get it. These

include those in underserved and minority markets, including the Hispanic market.

And the results are promising. In 2007, more than 11,500 SBA loans totaling \$1.5 billion went to the Hispanic small business community. These loans account for 10 percent of the overall number of loans and 7 percent of the total dollars SBA approved in 2007.

Our 8(a) Business Development Program also helps minority business owners who want to contract with the federal government. Serving economically and socially disadvantaged business owners, this program fosters business growth through technical and management experience. The program also supports firms in navigating through the federal procurement process.

In 2007, Hispanic 8(a) firms received close to \$8 billion in federal contracts. Approximately \$2 billion were received as result of an 8(a) set-aside.

Conclusion

Hispanic entrepreneurs in Texas can surely benefit from the SBA and the economic policies that President Bush has promoted, including his push for free trade agreements with countries like Columbia and Panama.

The bottom line is that SBA provides a wealth of resources for entrepreneurs like you. What we offer is good for small business, good for the Hispanic community, and good for Texas.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak about what SBA can do for the Hispanic business community in Texas.